CITY OF WHITEWATER
LANDMARKS NOMINATION FORM

Property Name(s): Hotel Walworth (Landmark Hotel)
Address/Location:
City & County: Whitewater, Walworth County   **Zip Code** 53190

Date of Construction: c.1885

Classification:

Ownership:	Type of Property:		# of Contributing	# of Non-Contributing
_x private	_x building(s)	-->	1	
__ public	__ site	-->		
If public,	__ structure	-->		
specify:	__ object	-->		
	__ district	Total:	1	

Architectural Style(s):   Queen Anne

Criteria:

_X_ A (history)	**Areas of Significance:** Architecture, Commerce
__ B (important persons)	**Period of Significance:** N/A
_X_ C (architecture/eng.)	**Significant Date:** c.1885
__ D (archeology)	**Significant Person:** N/A
	Cultural Affiliation: N/A
	Architect/Builder: Unknown

Description:

The historic Hotel Walworth, now known as the Landmark Hotel, is a three-story Queen Anne style commercial building that sits on the west end of Whitewater's Main Street commercial district. The building has a complex intersecting gable roofline composed of steeply-pitched gables. The gable walls are covered with wood shingles and have openings that light the attic story. On the main elevation of the building, the attic story opening is recessed behind a shingled arch. The walls of the building are constructed of cream brick and sit on a raised limestone foundation. These walls are punctuated with numerous single-light, double-hung sashes decorated with modern awnings. Projecting from the rear or north elevation of the building is a two-story ell that features a gable roof, cream brick walls, and a limestone foundation, as well.

The main entrance to the building is in the south elevation and is reached by a set of modern concrete steps. The entrance consists of a modern metal and glass door. Another entrance leads into the basement commercial space. It is accessed via a small flight of stairs to the west of the main entrance.

Originally, a large two-story wooden porch spanned the front or south elevation of the building and two second-story porches were attached to the east elevation. These have been removed, although historic photographs are available for possible restoration work in the future.

Statement of Significance

The old Hotel Walworth is eligible as a Whitewater Landmark for both architectural and historical significance. It is significant for architecture because it is a fine and relatively intact example of a Queen Anne-influenced hotel building. It is significant for history because it is a fine example of a small-town "luxury" hotel from the late nineteenth century. It is also the best example of an historic hotel building in the city and is one of the city's best preserved commercial buildings.

The old Hotel Walworth is not an elaborately decorated Queen Anne building, but shows its style by its overall large form and massing; by the use of the shingled gables, brick walls, and limestone foundation, which gives the building a variety of surface textures; and by the multiple gables along the roofline, which gives the appearance of an irregular plan. The porches were a decorative element that added to the building's original style. Although they are no longer extant, the rest of the building has a high level of integrity, with most of its historic features still intact.

Hotels and inns were always some of the first businesses begun in pioneer communities, and not long after Whitewater was first settled, in 1842, Freeman Pratt converted the Powers Tavern into the Whitewater Hotel. In 1850, S. Wintermute improved it and renamed it the Montour House. The Montour House was the best hotel in Whitewater during the mid-nineteenth century, and it was used for social and community gatherings, as well. Unfortunately, the Montour House burned in 1865. (Beckwith 1912:465)

The Badger State Hotel was begun prior to the Civil War and in 1862, it was improved and named the Cortland House. Located across from the railroad depot, it served primarily as a "railroad hotel," providing lodging for railroad workers and travelers. It was later named the Whitewater Hotel and still stands today, although its historic appearance is largely altered. Other hotels in Whitewater included the Exchange Hotel, the American House, and the Bower House, also known as the Hotel Duquesne. The most important hotel constructed in Whitewater, though, was the Hotel Walworth, built around 1885. It was the largest and most elegant of all of the city's hotels, meant to serve a middle and upper class clientele. (Beckwith 1912:465-66; City Directories; 1891 Plat Map)

The Hotel Walworth was the most prestigious hotel building in the city and as such, it was one of the most important commercial buildings in the downtown. It represents the era when the city's downtown was the center of its commercial activity and when large, luxury hotels were a fixture in every town. The building remains important today due to its size and prominent location. The retention of its historic features is an important element in the historic character of the city's downtown commercial district. Because it housed an important local business, the old Hotel Walworth is a historically significant landmark in the community.

Bibliography

Beckwith, Albert Clayton. *History of Walworth County, Wisconsin*. Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen, 1912.

City Diretories for the City of Whitewater. On file in the Whitewater Historical Society Museum, Whitewater, Wisconsin.

1891 Plat Map for the City of Whitewater. On file in the Whitewater Historical Society Museum, Whitewater, Wisconsin.

Form Prepared By: Carol Cartwright

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TRANSMIT CONFIRMATION REPORT

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NO.          :  004
RECEIVER     :            414 965 4107
TRANSMITTER  :  CITY OF WHITEWATER
DATE         :      OCT 09'98    10:36
DURATION     :  01'59
MODE         :        STD
PAGES        :  03
 RESULT      :  OK
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